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Letter dated 9 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a concept note for the open debate of the Security Council on the theme "United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture", to be held on 24 May 2016 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Amr **Aboulatta**
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Annex to the letter dated 9 May 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the open debate of the Security Council on the theme "United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation: Chapter VIII application and the future of the African Peace and Security Architecture", to be held on 24 May 2016

Background

1. Establishing and strengthening partnerships with regional organizations has been an essential pillar of United Nations efforts to maintain international peace and security, as envisaged in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Over time, the African Union and its regional economic communities and regional mechanisms have taken up an increasingly important role in response to growing peace and security challenges in Africa, thereby contributing to international collective security.

2. The African Peace and Security Architecture, as enshrined in the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, of 9 July 2002, represents a comprehensive structure for peace and security that includes conflict prevention, early warning and preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacebuilding, and the promotion of democratic practices, as well as humanitarian action and disaster management. The African Union has continued to achieve significant progress, not only in establishing institutions and mechanisms as part of the African Peace and Security Architecture, but also in increasingly utilizing them with a view to promoting "peace, security, and stability on the continent", as envisaged by the Constitutive Act of the African Union, adopted in 2000.

Context

3. Over the past 10 years, peace and security cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union has seen, among other developments, the launch of the Framework for the Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme for the African Union, in 2006, the launch of the joint annual consultations of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, in 2007, and the creation of the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security, in 2010. The United Nations Office to the African Union was established in 2010 and progressively strengthened to enhance the strategic partnership. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa played a major role in enhancing the coordinated integrated support of the United Nations system for Africa and mobilizing international support for African objectives.

4. Notwithstanding such partnership mechanisms, the gravity of the challenges to peace and security in Africa remains enormous. The past few years, especially, have witnessed a reversal of the positive trends that started in the early 1990s. The number of violent conflicts has increased significantly, a number of countries have relapsed into conflict, while violence in the wake of political upheaval has erupted in countries and regions that were considered stable. The nature of conflicts has changed; new and serious threats to peace and security have emerged, while the number of people displaced by war is at a historical peak.

5. The reviews of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, of United Nations peace operations and of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security took place against this backdrop, to revisit the existing tools and approaches of the United Nations for responding to the rising challenges. Common elements run across the outcomes of the reviews, namely: a renewed focus on conflict prevention; the primacy of political solutions to crises and conflicts; the imperative for a coherent, coordinated and integrated continuum of engagement throughout conflict and post-conflict phases, with a view to sustaining peace; the imperative of bridging gaps resulting from fragmentation across the wider United Nations system; and the need for close consultation with national institutions and stakeholders; as well as the necessity of predictable and sustainable funding and the inclusion of a strong gender dimension. The reviews found that stronger partnerships with regional and subregional organizations could help address a number of those issues and create a more solid foundation for the global peace and security architecture.

6. In the same vein, on 25 May 2013, the African Union Summit adopted the Fiftieth Anniversary Solemn Declaration, in which African leaders expressed their determination to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, which is now a key pillar of the African Union's visionary "Agenda 2063". In this context, the African Union developed a new road map (2016-2020) for the African Peace and Security Architecture. While the first road map (2011-2013) focused on the operationalization of the various structures and tools of the Architecture, the new road map is geared towards seamless and effective engagements throughout the various phases of conflict. It also aims at greater coordination and cohesion between the African Union and its regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, as well as among all pillars of the Architecture.

7. The road map is built on five thematic priorities: (a) conflict prevention, including early warning and preventive diplomacy; (b) crisis and/or conflict management; (c) post-conflict reconstruction and development and peacebuilding; (d) strategic security issues; and (e) coordination and partnerships.

8. In this context and moving forward, the United Nations and the African Union shall pursue a stronger and deeper strategic partnership for peace and security. The partnership should capitalize on the recommendations emanating from the three major United Nations reviews (see para. 5 above) as well as a reinvigorated African Peace and Security Architecture, towards a paradigm shift from the current focus on conflict management towards a more holistic approach that gives primacy to conflict prevention, to political solutions and to sustaining peace. In the first instance and as a short-term objective, the partnership should focus on means for enabling the African Union and subregional organizations to step up to the complex peace and security challenges, with a view to achieving burden-sharing and complementarity of arrangements in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter.

9. Already, the Secretariat and the African Union Commission are in the process of developing a joint framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security. The framework seeks to bring the African Union and the United Nations into collaboration, from the earliest indicators of potential conflict, to plan on prevention, and to strengthen cooperation throughout the subsequent stages of the response to conflict, including conflict management and resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.

Objectives

10. While cooperation with the African Union has been discussed on previous occasions at the Security Council, the proposed open debate should help generate renewed momentum for strengthening peace and security cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, within the remit of Chapter VIII of the Charter. As the United Nations itself is now focused on identifying the synergies between its various pillars in the maintenance of international peace and security, the open debate offers a unique opportunity to explore avenues of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union from a holistic perspective. It will also highlight the need to revisit the existing framework for cooperation in the light of the recent reviews of peace operations, of the peacebuilding architecture and of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), as well as of the new road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture. By doing so, it would be sparking a process of cross-fertilization, with the potential to further strengthen the two organizations simultaneously and help them achieve their goals and objectives in the field of peace and security. It will provide a platform for Member States and other participants to reflect on the following three major areas:

(a) The past 10 years of United Nations-African Union peace and security cooperation, in order to assess the effectiveness of such cooperation in maintaining peace and security on the African continent. In this regard, participants are invited to point to key achievements, as well as to serious deficiencies undermining the effectiveness, of such cooperation, including cooperation with subregional organizations;

(b) Key recommendations emanating from the reviews of United Nations peace operations, of the peacebuilding architecture and of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) that could be of direct relevance to operationalizing a renewed strategic United Nations-African Union partnership, and the linkages of those key recommendations to the road map for the African Peace and Security Architecture. Participants are invited to suggest concrete measures to help confer a strategic orientation to the renewed partnership;

(c) The existing and future context of such a strategic partnership, which should be tailored to the specific context of each situation, with a particular focus on mechanisms for improving: (i) early response to early warning (conflict prevention and the pursuit of political solutions); (ii) conflict management and resolution (mediation and peacekeeping); and (iii) joint strategies and measures aimed at building and sustaining peace.

Specific issues for consideration

- Practical ways for developing common or joint analysis, planning and assessment, and for fostering a shared understanding, between the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, of conflict situations, with a view to shaping joint response strategies.
- Strategies to enhance United Nations-African Union cooperation in the area of conflict prevention, including a focus on existing preventive tools and their effectiveness.
- Best practices in harmonizing the mediation efforts of the United Nations and of the African Union and its regional economic communities and regional

mechanisms in African conflicts, in order to avoid forum shopping, ensure that the two organizations are working in unison and send unified or complementary messages to the parties to a conflict.

- Existing and future cooperation in planning and authorizing African peacekeeping operations, utilizing standby arrangements and managing transitions between United Nations missions and African Union missions, including by further enhancing the participation of top troop and police contributors in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping operations, as well as by institutionalizing capacity-building and training initiatives in support of African centres of excellence in the field of regional peace and security.
- Efforts towards galvanizing predictable support and building the capacities of the African Union in conflict prevention and resolution, peacemaking and peacebuilding.
- Existing African peacebuilding policies and tools, such as the African Union Policy on Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development and the African Solidarity Initiative, with a view to exploring means for jointly addressing the root causes of conflicts and for advancing a comprehensive approach to sustainable peace focused on building national and local capacities to avoid relapses into conflicts and, in this regard, reflect on future cooperation and support to nascent initiatives by the African Union, such as the creation of an African Union Centre for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development.
- New areas of potential cooperation and joint response to emerging and contemporary challenges to peace and security in Africa.

Speakers

- A representative of the United Nations Secretariat
- A representative of the African Union Commission
- A representative of the Peacebuilding Commission
- A representative of the United Nations Office to the African Union

Format and outcome

11. The meeting will take the form of an open debate. All Member States are invited to attend and make statements. Security Council members will hold consultations on the meeting's outcome.

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